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INR COMMENTS ON NIE CONCEPT PAPER ON THE GREEK/TURKISH  
MILITARY BALANCE

We would agree that updating the 1976 IIM on the Greek-Turkish balance of forces would be useful in providing a reference resource. We do not believe, however, that an NIE is the proper format for such a study. Moreover, we believe that the title, concept paper and TOR of the NIE as presently drafted predetermine misleading affirmative answers to the essential questions posed: Does an equilibrium exist between Greek and Turkish military forces, and, if it does, is it an important deterrent to war?

We question the existence of a military equilibrium. We would in fact posit that Greece's perception of its own weakness and vulnerability--perhaps as much a function of national psychology as of force levels--is the principal deterrent for Greece.

We would also judge that political, economic and psychological factors are more effective deterrents to war than force levels. For example, Turkey is deterred more by fear of damaging relations with the US and the EC than by Greek military strength.

Presupposing that military equilibrium exists has the inherent danger of biasing policy judgments. It would, in particular, lend weight to the importance the Greeks place on maintaining the 7/10 ratio in security assistance to the two countries. It would also downplay the importance and disproportionate roles of the two countries' forces in their NATO roles of defending against Warsaw Pact forces. (The assertion on page one of the concept paper that "each side has been trying to enhance its...military capabilities,...to achieve advantage over the other" may appear correct from a Greek perspective but is absurd from the Turkish point of view.)

For these reasons, we recommend downgrading the NIE to an IIM that would assess the relative strengths of Greek and Turkish military forces, their current deployment and their correlation with opposing Warsaw Pact forces without trying to claim that equilibrium between them deters war.